

Questions and Answers

Are cost of living adjustments (COLAs) done every year?

Yes, these cost of living adjustments happen every year. The maximum benefit is adjusted every year. Other adjustments include updates to the standard deduction, shelter deduction, income tests (gross and net), and D-SNAP allotment. By law, States must make these SNAP adjustments each October 1.

What is the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)?

The ARRA is also known as the stimulus package. It became law in 2009 in order to foster economic activity in response to the recession.

How did ARRA affect SNAP?

ARRA increased the maximum SNAP allotment to provide larger benefit amounts to clients. This increase in benefits is expected to end on November 1, 2013.

When will the changes from ARRA go into effect?

SNAP benefits may go down starting on November 1.

How much will my benefits change on November 1, 2013?

Your benefits depend on many things—income, household size and expenses. So it is hard to say how your benefits will change. This table gives you an idea what the reduced amount might be for households that have no income.

SNAP Maximum Monthly Benefit Levels

Household Size	October 1, 2013 (ARRA stimulus levels)	November 1, 2013 (June 2013 TFP levels)	Difference
1	\$200	\$189	-\$11
2	\$367	\$347	-\$20
3	\$526	\$497	-\$29
4	\$668	\$632	-\$36
5	\$793	\$750	-\$43
6	\$952	\$900	-\$52
7	\$1,052	\$995	-\$57
8	\$1,202	\$1,137	-\$65
Add on	\$150	\$142	-\$8

How will I be notified of a change in my SNAP benefits?

You will be notified by your State. You may also hear about these changes via the news, posters in local offices, or from retailers where you shop with your SNAP benefits. You might also get a notice in the mail about the changes to your case.

How do I check the balance for my SNAP benefits to know how much I have?

Different States offer different ways to check your balance. However, a couple of easy ways are:

- Check the SNAP balance on your last grocery receipt.
- If your State provides information for your SNAP account on-line, sign in and check your balance on-line.
- Call your [State's EBT customer service number](#). Customer service numbers for clients are located in the left column of the chart.
- Call the toll-free number on the back of your EBT card.

How can I figure out how to feed my family healthful foods on a lower budget?

USDA provides several resources to help you prepare healthy meals on a low budget:

- [10-Tips Nutrition Series](#)
- [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#)
- [Plan, Compare and Prepare](#)
- [Eat Right When Money's Tight.](#)

The SNAP [Recipe Finder](#) helps you create cookbooks and shopping lists. Use it to search for recipes based on total cost or cost per serving.

What should I do if I need food right away?